

March 13, 2012

Hello Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski, Senator Gomes, Representative Santiago and other committee members:

OPPOSED Raised Bill No. 5433 : AN ACT CREATING A PROCEDURE FOR PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN WITH THE STATE.

My name is Mary-Ann Langton, and I lived in West Hartford. Over the last 35 years, I employ personal care attendants (PCAs). My PCAs are instructed by me on how to perform my personal and other daily living activities needs. By their assistance and commitment to me, I am able to live independently in a housing cooperative, to work and in carrying out my goals as a productive working citizen. Therefore, I STRONGLY OPPOSED Raised Bill 5433 because it would have many ramifications to my life.

Everyone in this room believes that personal assistants should get higher pay and benefits. However, there are questions that are puzzling to people with disabilities and some of the questions are the following: If PCAs are unionize, where is the funding coming from to pay the higher wages and benefits to the PCAs. Is the state going to provide these funds? The answer is 'no' because the fact the state is in financial crisis. The only two alternatives are to reduce hours or to add hours to people with disabilities' care plans. Both options will have great impact on the lives of people with disabilities. I worry about my ability to live in the community if my hours are reduced. On the flipside is that many people with disabilities would be capped out of the programs because they reached the nursing facilities' cost. CT strives to move out people with disabilities from skilled nursing facilities by Money Follows the Person Federal Grant RATHER THAN move people with disabilities into facilities.

I am disappointed that the majority of the Personal Care Attendant Home Care Quality Workforce Council IS NOT made up of people with disabilities. There is only one person with disability that is a member on the Council. How can people without disabilities make decisions about the future of PCAs? Both people with and without disabilities should be at the table discussing the critical issue.

I hope that you will consider my testimony and vote NO to Bill 5433.

Sincerely,

Mary-Ann Langton

West Hartford